

Key Concepts			
Shekinah	The dwelling or divine presence of God often shown as a cloud.	Messiah	The promised deliverer of the Jewish nation. The word means ‘anointed one’
Synagogue	A building or place of meeting for worship in the Jewish faith	Covenant	A promise or an agreement. Covenants were made between God, Abraham and Moses.
Shabbat (Sabbath)	The Jewish day of rest and seventh day of the week	Mitzvot	Actions that Jews must perform or avoid. There are 613 including the Ten Commandments
Kosher	Means ‘clean’ or ‘fit’. It describes food that is okay to eat for Jewish people.	Torah	The Jewish written law and the first 5 books of the Hebrew Bible

<p><u>Brit milah, Bar/Bat mitzvah & Bat Chayil</u></p> <p>Important moments in the life of a Jew are marked by special rituals and traditions. They help to show thanks to God, bring God into everyday life and increase a sense of Jewish identity and belonging. Brit milah is very important in Judaism. It is a symbol of the Abrahamic covenant. Bar/Bat mitzvah and Bat Chayil are coming of age rituals where a Jewish child gains adult responsibility.</p>
<p><u>Sources of Authority</u></p> <p>“Every male among you must be circumcised.” Genesis</p> <p>"Any uncircumcised male...shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." Genesis</p> <p>And the boy grew up and the Lord blessed him” Judges</p> <p>“My son, forget not my teaching; but let your heart keep my commandments.” Proverbs</p>

Brit milah	One of the most significant rituals for a male Jew is Brit milah . This dates back to the time of Abraham and the covenant of circumcision. It involves the removal of the foreskin and takes place on the 8th day after the birth of the child. It is performed in front of a minyan . The baby boy is placed on a cushion held by a person called the sandek , this is generally the grandfather or the oldest person in observance. This is a great honour as the tradition of the Jewish faith is being passed down to the next generation that was promised to Abraham in the covenant. The person doing the circumcision is known as a mohel . During the Brit milah the boy is given his Hebrew name .
Bar mitzvah	On the Sabbath nearest to his 13th birthday , the boy will become Bar Mitzvah which means ‘ Son of the Commandment ’. During the Sabbath service, the boy will stand at the bimah and read aloud part of the Torah. He will wear tefillin (black leather boxes containing an extract of the Torah) for the first time. The boy’s father will then recite a prayer of thanks for his sons coming of age. The boy is now counted as part of the minyan and may lead part of the synagogue services.
Bat mitzvah	A girl from a Reform Jewish community will prepare for her Bat Mitzvah (which means ‘ Daughter of the Commandment ’) in a similar way to a boy preparing for his Bar Mitzvah. Unlike a boy, she will do this around the time of her 12th birthday . During the Bat Mitzvah ceremony itself, the girl will not wear the tefillin (black leather boxes containing an extract of the Torah). She may lead prayers and read from the Torah scroll. The Bat Mitzvah demonstrates that she is taking on these additional privileges and responsibilities . Some Reform Jews ask that the girl read a section from the Tanakh from one of the female figures. She may be asked to prepare a speech based on the reading or talk about a ‘ Mitzvah project ’.
Bat Chayil	Bat Chayil means ' daughter of valour ' and is an Orthodox Jewish ceremony. It takes place in Orthodox synagogues at a date close to the girl's 12th birthday. The girl will give a talk on a Jewish topic, but not during the Sabbath service. Orthodox Jews see the role of women and men as different . Women do not take an active part in the synagogue services, but have a very important role to play in the home. Bat Chayil allows the girl to take up her adult role in the community.

<p><u>Exam Practice</u></p> <p>b) Describe the ritual of brit milah (5)</p> <p>c) Explain the different ways in which Jews celebrate Bar and Bat Mitzvah (8)</p>
